

# Mental Health Newsletter

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## Message from the Executive Psychologist Psychology Training at Hines: Growth and Opportunity

Education of future health care providers is central to VA's mission. As training opportunities in Psychology have expanded in recent years, I am grateful for the opportunity to apprise the Hines community on the breadth of Psychology training and its impact on the hospital.

Training in Clinical Psychology is offered at three levels, Practicum, Internship, and Fellowship.

### Practicum

Graduate students in Psychology obtain their first direct contact with patients during a Practicum. As such, it is a critical period for learning the essentials of patient care—establishing rapport, performing psychological assessments, and engaging patients in treatment. Students are drawn mainly from Chicago area graduate programs in clinical psychology and are on campus some twenty hours per week in a mix of clinical contracts, close supervision, and didactic education. Founded in 1947 and commencing major reorganization in 2000 under the leadership of the Practicum Coordinator, Kathleen O'Donnell, PhD, the externship program has grown to accepting ten students that will be trained in Neuropsychology, Trauma Services, or Polytrauma Psychology.

### Internship

Internship is the culmination of students' doctoral training in Psychology. Interns serve full time for an academic year and receive a stipend through the Office of Academic Affiliations in Central Office. In 2008, under the leadership of Psychology Training Director Bernard Sladen, PhD, our program expanded to six positions. Since its founding in 1950, we have followed a generalist approach to Internship that exposes students to both psychiatric and medical patients. We seek students with strong backgrounds in the scientific basis of behavior, who during their training, learn to apply their scholarly foundations to a variety of clinical tasks. Other key training goals include development of professional judgment, responsibility and identity, experiences with a diverse patient population; and fostering compassion. A longstanding agreement with Loyola Stritch School of Medicine permits even more training opportunities, as students may complete one of their rotations with psychologists at our affiliated medical school. The national reach of our Internship program was reaffirmed in the recent match: for the second year running, all slots were filled by students attending graduate programs outside of Illinois. First accredited by the American Psychological Association in 1976, our last accreditation visit in 2005 resulted in a seven-year renewal, the longest time possible period.

### Postdoctoral Fellowship

As Clinical Psychology becomes more specialized, and VA's needs for clinical psychologists with specialized skills has grown, the Office of Academic Affiliations in 2008 offered an opportunity for the establishment of new Postdoctoral Fellowships in Psychology. Dr. Sladen navigated a group of staff psychologists through a highly competitive application process that granted Psychology four Postdoctoral Fellowship positions. These Central Office funded positions, available for applicants that have completed all doctoral requirements in Psychology, augment generalist training with a special emphasis in one of four areas: Neuropsychology (two-year fellowship), Primary Care—Mental Health, Rehabilitation, and Trauma—Substance Abuse. Along with enhancing knowledge and clinical skills in the area of special emphasis, fellows develop skills in supervision, teaching, program evaluation, research, organization, management, and administration relevant to professional practice. Fellows, Interns, and Practicum students attend common didactic education programs to foster shared learning. Exemplifying accomplishments by our fellows, our Neuropsychology Fellow, Jessica Kinkela, PhD (under the supervision of Amanda Urban, PhD), recently had a poster presentation regarding assessment of traumatic brain injury accepted at the June conference of the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology. We will be seeking initial accreditation of the Fellowship Program in 2011.

### Learning and Contributing Together

Our training programs are a continual reminder that education is a "two-way street." As much as Hines provides a fertile ground for learning, so too, do our students give much back to the hospital community. They are a constant source of energy, infusing the staff with their own ideas and newly gained knowledge. Students never fail to ask tough-provoking and probing questions that can precipitate a reexamination of assumptions—always a long term benefit. We are mindful of the stewardship that a long history of Psychology training bestows, yet ready to adapt our training programs to current needs. Caring for our patients demands maintenance of these best traditions while incorporating approaches consistent with current needs. The VA is the only healthcare system in the country that requires completion of a Psychology doctorate and internship in programs accredited by the American Psychological Association. Some 93% of the current Hines Psychology staff obtained training within the VA. Today's students will be caring for tomorrow's patients, and I am convinced that the atmosphere of learning supported throughout Hines community will remain a vibrant force for years to come.

—Richard Greenblatt, PhD

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## Hines CWT

In January, Hines Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) underwent a review from VA Central Office for "Fidelity to Evidence Based Practice in Supported Employment." Hines CWT program did very well, achieving the fifth highest score on this measure in the country, putting us in the 86th percentile compared to other VA CWT Supported Employment programs nationwide. One of our Supported Employment veterans was featured on the front page of the Chicago Tribune for the work he does at the Midwest Brain Injury Clubhouse.

Hines CWT was also identified by VA Central Office as a leader in utilizing special hiring procedures for disabled veterans. In the past year, CWT has placed nearly 30 significantly disabled veterans into full-time federal employment. Ken Weber, Jim Gilbert and Matt McGrath were the featured presenters to the National CWIT conference call on March 15th on the topic of "Schedule 'A' Appointments in the Federal Government."



## Announcing the New National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) has created a National Call Center for Homeless Veterans to ensure that homeless veterans or veterans at-risk of homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers, and others in the community. **Callers will**

**talk to a trained VA counselor who will conduct a brief needs assessment and connect them to the Homeless Point of Contact at their**

**nearest VA facility.** Information will be provided about VA homeless programs

*Please share the number with veterans who may benefit from this service: 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838)*

and mental health services in their community. Please spread the number to clients, colleagues, and community members who might benefit from this new service: **1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838)**. Tony Spillie, LCSW and W. Baxter, LCSW are the Hines' Points-of-Contact (POC)...they would be happy to answer any questions.

## A Study of Mental Health Stigma of the Military

In a study conducted by Mike Reynolds at Iona College, 119 civilians were presented vignettes on the mental health of both military and civilians. The vignettes told a variety of stories about people being diagnosed with various mental illnesses from schizophrenia to major depressive disorder. Reynolds measured

stigma attached to the subjects by asking the participants who was responsible for their illness. While the results between military and civilian were similar, there was one blaring exception. The contributor did not find the military members personally responsible for their mental illness. The civilians surveyed believed 65 percent of the civilian

mentally ill group was responsible versus 31 percent of the military group. The reason for this difference? People assume the mental health of veterans is the direct result from what was seen during combat. Reynolds states this study "gives hope to veterans who might otherwise be afraid to see help because of public perception." (Taken from gradPSYCH, March 2010)



# Announcements

## Congratulations:

Dr. Tsai, APA Distinguished Life Fellow

Dr. Bhatt, Retirement

Pauline Geary, Retirement

Sally Felichio, Retirement

## Service Awards

Dr. Tummala, 15 years of service

Tony Spillie, 30 years

Please welcome MHSL new employees for FY10 2nd Quarter:

Laurie Boskovich

Katherine Byrnes

Toya Crain

Stephanie Dove

Carl Johnson

Lisa Jur

Miriam Krasno

Rochelle Mesa-Magee

Aspasia Palios

Brittany Powers

Rachel Safranski

## Fisher House Opening

The Fisher House on Hines' campus began placing families on March 1st. A program has been created to assist staff in identifying potential Fisher House candidates and referring them for placement. The two story brick building has 20 bedrooms and a community kitchen, dining, family room and laundry facilities.

The common areas of the house are designed so families can gather together and provide support for each other during their stay. The kitchen was constructed to accommodate every family during their stay at the house; there are three refrigerators and multiple cooking areas for more than one family to use the space at a time.

The Fisher House will be accepting families of any patient who resides

more than 50 miles from Hines or experiences a commute of two hours or more. The Fisher House Foundation, created by the late Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, manages 43 houses throughout the United States and two in Germany. The Hines Fisher House is the first in Illinois.

On May 28, there will be a Fisher House dedication and all employees are welcome.



## Hines Patient Health Info Center

The Hines Patient Health Information Center (PHIC) is now open. The patient health information center is a resource center (library) with general health information which is available to veterans, patients, staff, family members and friends. The PHIC is open from 8:30 am—3:30 pm Monday through Friday. It is located in Building 200, the 3rd floor, Room 3139. For more information please call 708-202-4430.

## ECT Approval

Good news! After almost two years of waiting, ECT has been approved by Central Office. ECT will hopefully begin on or before July 1, 2010. The approval process was a joint effort between Surgery, Anesthesia, Nursing, Informatics, Biomed, Credentialing and Privileges, Mental Health, PI and VISN 12 leadership.

## More Beds in 2 South

Effective March 16, the bed capacity has increased to its full capacity of 29 beds. This bed increase will help out our veterans with more severe psychological needs.

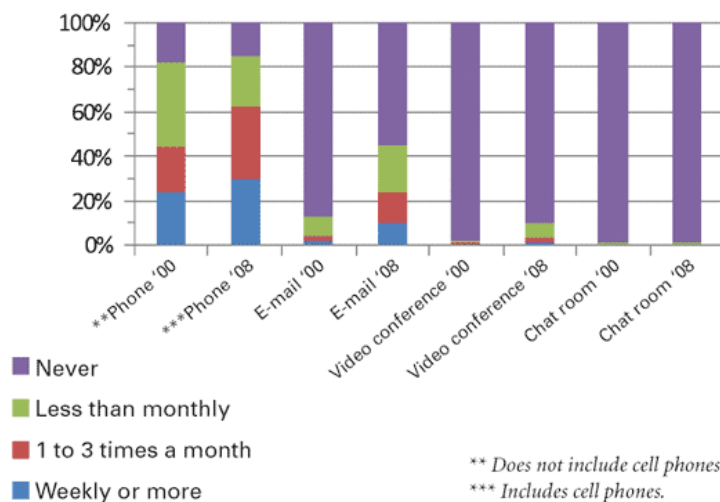


## Telepsychology on the Rise

In a study conducted by the American Psychological Association, psychologists are using email and the telephone to interact with their patients. Emailing has tripled among psychologists between 2000 and 2008 and videoconferencing has risen from 2 percent to 10 percent in the same time frame.

(Taken from Monitor on Psychology, March 2010)

Telepsychology use in providing direct health services



## Ten Minutes Could Save Your Life

Edward Hines VA Hospital is offering FREE SCREENINGS during Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week. Stop by E.N.T. Clinic, Building 228, Room 1061 on April 14, 2010 from 2-4 pm. Every adult should be tested because if diagnosed early oral, head and neck cancer is easily treated without complications and the chances of survival greatly increase. The screening only takes ten minutes. If you are out of town on the 14th, free screenings are being offered at various institutions. Please visit [www.OHANCAW.com](http://www.OHANCAW.com) for more information.

## New Help Desk for VISN12

VISN12 established a centralized Help Desk to address issues faced by users. This Help Desk would only help with Tier 1 support, which resets a network password or a Vista Verify Code. If the issue is a Tier 2 or 3 problem, the Help Desk would create a trouble ticket to be passed along to Hines' OI&T staff. **This should result in a shorter time for trouble ticket resolution.** The IT Help Desk number that has been used for years, 25535, will be out of service. **The new Help Desk number is 44357 (4HELP)** and the service desk will be open during regular business hours 8:00 am—4:30 pm.

## Public Health Service

The Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service (PHS) used to serve the underserved—people in federal prisons and immigration detention centers, members of American Indian tribes, uninsured and impoverished. PHS is now helping another group: military personnel and their families. The Department of Defense and PHS have agreed to have up to 200 mental health professionals help in the various branches of the military. Recruitment is underway for at least 70 civilian psychologists and military psychologists who have left active duty.

(Taken from Monitor on Psychology, November 2009)

## Spotting the enemy

Samuel Renshaw was a psychologist at Ohio State University studying perception, memory and learning during WWII. Renshaw initially studied, and trained, subjects to read quicker but keeping the same level of comprehension. When Naval Officer and Ohio State former employee Howard Hamilton heard of Renshaw's study, he thought it could benefit the military. Renshaw's techniques helped military personnel recognize enemy aircraft and ships quicker and with greater accuracy. Over one million Army and Navy personnel have been trained in Renshaw's techniques and his work is credited for saving lives during WWII.

(Taken from Monitor on Psychology, March 2010)

# Suicide Prevention

The Suicide Prevention program at Hines is comprised of a team of Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC). The SPC's oversee the identification of "high-risk" patients and coordinate ongoing monitoring and enhancements in their care. "High-Risk" patients include Veterans with recent suicide attempts and those identified as "high-risk" by their mental health providers.

The Suicide Prevention Team promotes awareness and participates in community outreach. The VA's Suicide Prevention Initiative requires that all VA staff is trained in Suicide Prevention. This training is also provided to various organizations in the community involving Veteran Care.

## Contact Mental Health at Hines

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital  
5000 S. Fifth Avenue  
Hines, IL 60141  
Phone: (708) 202-8387

**Mental Health is located  
in Building 228**



## About Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital



Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, located 12 miles west of downtown Chicago on a 147-acre campus, offers primary, extended and specialty care and serves as a tertiary care referral center for VISN 12. Specialized clinical programs include Blind Rehabilitation, Spinal Cord Injury, Neurosurgery, Radiation Therapy, and Cardiovascular Surgery. The hospital also serves as the VISN 12 southern tier hub for pathology, radiology, radiation therapy, human resource management, and fiscal services.

Hines VAH currently operates 483 beds and six community based outpatient clinics in Manteno, Elgin, Oak Lawn, Aurora, LaSalle, and Joliet. Over 584,000 patient visits occurred in fiscal year 2008 providing care to over 52,000 veterans, primarily from Cook, DuPage, and Will counties.